

Indians in Foreign Lands

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FOREWORD

Slavery invariably induces an unhealthy egoistic concentration upon oneself. This concentration is further enhanced by the helplessness of the slave. It is therefore no wonder that India forgets many of the ordinary obligations that free and normally functioning nations recognise and discharge. Every nation is mindful of its nationals abroad. Their political and economic rights as of those who live within the geographical borders of the homeland are the concern of patriotic effort. Any insult or indignity to nationals abroad is resented and retribution and retaliation soon follows.

India has her nationals scattered abroad in distant lands but she manages to forget them in her more pressing preoccupations. As long as foreign domination lasts, this concentration upon the all engrossing political problem within India can not be avoided. But even then we can not afford to neglect our obligations to Indians overseas. Their theoretical claim to our help has always been recognised by the Congress in many of its resolutions. In South Africa Gandhiji however compelled attention. The nation responded with advice and monetary and moral support. Ever since we have been taking little more lively interest in the concern of our people settled abroad. But the knowledge of an average political worker about this great problem is insufficient and inadequate. He has a vague idea that his people lives in foreign lands subject to many and various social, economic and political handicaps. He roughly knows that they are insulted and humiliated by the white settlers, who have made themselves the masters everywhere. Even the politically awakened Indian

has little knowledge of the magnitude of the problem. He does not know that for every hundred Indians who live in India, one lives outside India. He is not acquainted with the facts that in some of the islands and settlements his people not only outnumber the whites but also the native populations. He does not exactly know how these big colonies of Indians maintain themselves economically. He has a faint idea that most of them went as indentured labourers and are perhaps free labourers today. That they have secured some place in agriculture, trade, industry and administration, he does not know. He is unaware of the powerful cultural bonds that unite them to their native land, saving them "from the strangle grip of Christianity and consequently from the nameless merging into a dull hybrid cultureless existence." The average Indian has no knowledge of the new dangers that the Indians overseas are confronted with by the new imperial economic policies. He does not know of their linguistic communal and provincial differences and their native individualistic tendencies that keep them apart from each other and make concerted action and opposition difficult.

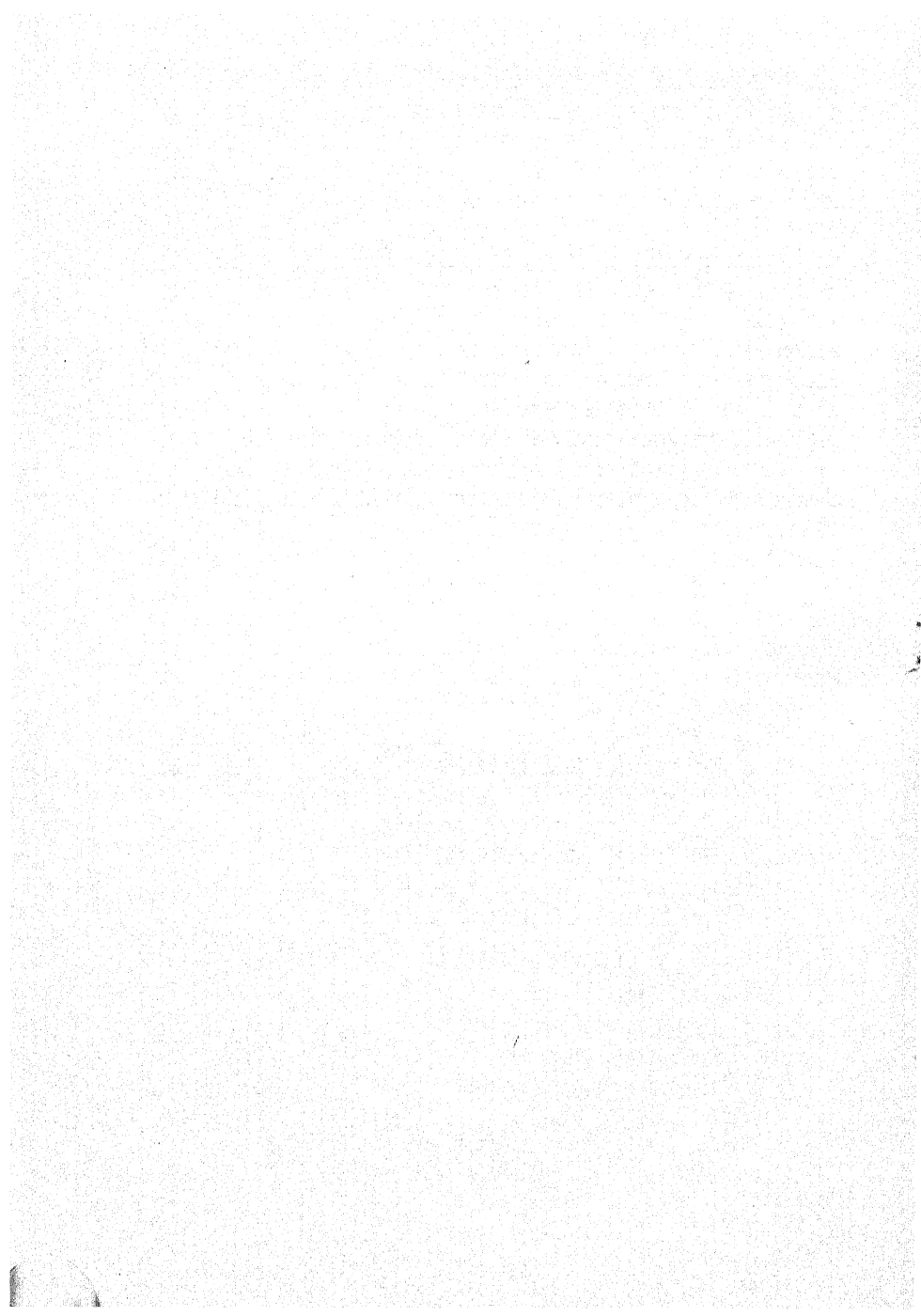
All this knowledge about the Indians overseas, their hopes and fears, their needs and aspirations, their difficulties and opportunities have been described very ably in a small compass by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia of our Foreign Department. He has marshalled significant facts and telling figures to document his brochure. Dr. Lohia has utilized his opportunities fruitfully. He has sought out contacts and sedulously encouraged and cultivated them. The little book will therefore be helpful not only to us here but also to the different groups of overseas Indians 3 millions strong spread over "a belt which runs around the Equator from the north Atlantic over the Indian Ocean to the South Pacific."

I am entirely at one with Doctor Lohia in his conclusions. If Indians overseas are to live a healthy and

prosperous life as good citizens in the lands of their adoption, they must shed off their communal, provincial and linguistic differences that they have carried from the Homeland. They must provide universal education for the children of their community for which they have ample opportunities. Above all they must feel their unity, solidarity and identity of interests with the natives of the soil, the Negro, the other Asiatics living alongside with them and such white-settlers who themselves are the underdogs of capitalist and imperial exploitation. India can help them by supplying the right type of teachers and its moral and material help in their struggle against inequity and injustice. The initiative at effort and reform must however be with them. As in other spheres so here India can do her full even as she frees herself from Imperial Domination and attains Purna Swaraj. But even as we get fresh accession of strength by our political struggle here, we get power and authority to help our countrymen abroad. If we had not used the weapon of boycott effectively in the Civil Disobedience movements, we could not have made our boycott of Zanzibar cloves as telling as we have done. With added strength come added opportunities and these well utilized further add to our strength. The day is not far distant when the imperialist will know that he insults our nationals abroad only at his risk and peril.

I congratulate Dr. Rammanohar Lohia on what he has kept before his countrymen here and abroad. I have no doubt that the pamphlet will be found widely instructive and useful.

J. B. KRIPALANI



INTRODUCTION

Though spread all over the world, the essential concentration of Indian populations overseas has been effected on a belt which runs around the Equator from the North Atlantic over the Indian Ocean to the South Pacific. British Guiana in South America and the neighbouring island of Trinidad contain Indian communities which are nearly one-half of their entire population. The entire South and East of Africa are dotted over by considerable Indian populations. In the three islands of the Indian Ocean, Zanzibar, Mauritius and Ceylon, Indians constitute anywhere between one-tenth and three-fourths of their respective populations. Situate between the Bay of Bengal and the China Sea, they account for nearly one-seventh of the population of Malaya. Beyond Australia, in the Fiji Islands, they are nearly as many as the Fijians themselves. The Equatorial life-line of the British Empire is effectively intersected with vast Indian concentrations.

Army-chiefs and administrators built up Britain's colonial empire and capitalists owned it and worked it. Labour and tradesmen were equally necessary for the economic opening out of this Empire. India supplied these, while Britain produced the Empire's capitalists and administrators. In its essentials, the present position of Indians in the British colonies is a continuation of what it has been ever since the first migrations started nearly a hundred years ago. The insult of the indenture system is of course gone as also the feudal serfdom which it entailed. The Indian is no longer tied to his employer in a system of vicious contracts extending over many years. The indentured labourer has also in a number of cases transformed him-

self into the small peasant. However, the Indian continues to be the labourer, small peasant and petty trader of Britain's colonial empire. In recent years, he has also risen into the free professions and stray individuals have also come into the ownership of large plantations and factories. Essentially, however, the strength as also the weakness of the Indian position in the British colonies depends upon the labourer, small peasant, petty trader and the free professions. As the difficulties of the Empire and consciousness among the masses are growing, the vast Indian concentrations in the British colonies are rapidly acquiring economic and political importance.

Elsewhere in the Empire and in other foreign countries, Indians number many and have risen into fairly important positions. There is a string of Indian traders which starts from Tokio and Hongkong and extends over Iraq and Gibraltar into Panama. There are always a large number of Indian students in the more important world-cities. Some Indians have held and still hold important professorial, consular, army and international missions of free foreign countries. Such Indians are however political exiles from home and, though they have brought honour to their country's name, their position is no index to the general political and economic conditions of Overseas Indians.

Overseas Indians have always suffered from a variety of disabilities and have been very much a tragic community. They went out from their country as serfs, labourers and tradesmen, and India, subject herself to foreign domination, was unable to be of any political or economic assistance to them. They are now faced with a danger which almost threatens to wipe them out. This is the danger of the attempt of British Imperialism to achieve structural changes in its colonial economy. The pre-War structure of a multitude of petty tradesmen and small peasants is utterly inadequate to the needs of post-War imperialism that has no further colonial

territories to open out. Imperialism must therefore rationalise itself and wipe out the petty tradesmen and peasants. Indians are the direct victims of this new imperialist attack. Elsewhere too, the general increase of nationalist feeling and the inability of India to be of any assistance have caused a certain deterioration of the Indian position.

Any effective resistance to the new imperialist policies will depend on how far Indians overseas are able to grapple with and overcome their own weaknesses. Their individualistic past and sectional divisions on the basis of their home language and province are their first bane. Uprooted from the communal life of home, Overseas Indians have tended to be narrowly individualistic by virtue of their calling of petty trades and small farms. In addition, the different Indian languages, predominantly Hindustani, Tamil and Gujarati, that are spoken among them have created barriers without any inter-communication or mutual understanding. These divisions have sometimes degenerated into shabby squabbles. The Hindustani, Tamilian and Gujarati have kept aloof from one another. Increasing enlightenment and the general imperialist attack have created an atmosphere in which these age-old divisions have little chance of survival. It should be a first task of Overseas Indians to consolidate and make intensive use of this atmosphere.

There is something tenacious in Indian culture and, despite the distance of thousands of miles, this culture has stuck to our overseas compatriots. Inevitably, the dominant trend of this culture has been religious. This explains the comparatively small number of Overseas Indians who have changed their religion and embraced Christianity instead. To the extent that the religious quality of Indian culture has saved our overseas communities from the strangle-grip of Christianity and, consequently, from the nameless merging into a dull, hybrid and cultureless existence, it has been useful. It

has however had serious drawbacks. The dividing line between religion and orthodoxy is not always clear and Overseas Indians have lately fallen under a more serious spell of orthodoxy. Hindu and Mohammedan preachers alike, who know little and care to know less about the world in which they live, have in recent years migrated in large numbers to the colonies of Indian concentration. They have not only confirmed their flock in their faiths but have encouraged them to look upon religion as the supreme principle of life. This religion is often a superstition. From so far off a land like Trinidad, distanced from us by nearly ten thousand miles, the Congress Foreign Department has received a striking illustration of superstitious religion. The Trinidad Hindus seem to have been carrying on an endless controversy as to whether marriages could be performed after dusk according to Vedic rites and they have requested our co-operation in the solution of this controversy. Such superstitious orthodoxy among Hindus and Mohammedans alike tends to undermine the Indian position in foreign lands and keeps them in a state of ineffective ignorance. Religion becomes their staple mental food. They have little attention and energy for the more engrossing problems of life and culture. Overseas Indians must effect a fundamental change in their mental outlook and shift the emphasis of their thought from religious superstition to more vital cultural problems. It is true that a very large number of Indians in different lands have already liberated themselves from superstitious beliefs and, in consequence, the task of liberating entire Indian communities overseas should not be difficult.

Overseas Indians have a great possibility of achieving universal literacy and education. Still, their attainments in this field thus far are not very praiseworthy. To an extent the discriminating policies of the various Governments who do not regard the education of Indian children as one of their charges is responsible for this state of

affairs. Whatever the attitude of the various Governments, Overseas Indians must and can help themselves to a large extent in the matter of widespread and universal education. They can teach Hindustani, the universal language of India, in their schools and ought to be able to impart to their students a working knowledge of the African and other languages that are spoken in their midst.

There is among Overseas Indians a wide lag between the educated classes and the masses. They know little mutual contact. The free professions and the rich maintain a social existence of their own and seldom concern themselves with the problems of the small planter and the labourer. If the free professions and labourers alike are to stay in the hard struggle of the overseas colonies, they have to destroy the barriers that have separated them in the past. Such attempts are already afoot in various colonies and they have to be further intensified.

This takes us to the problem of organisation among Overseas Indians. Due to individualism and divisions of language, education and religious orthodoxy they have been a sadly disorganised community in the past. An effective break with this past has already been made. The new economic policies of British Imperialism in the colonies will further create the pre-conditions of effective organisation among Overseas Indians. In their turn they must forge ahead with the destruction of various evils from which they have suffered in the past and create solid and well-knit communities. They already possess several newspapers and have formed themselves into associations. These newspapers should give vigorous expression of Indian opinion on several problems as they arise from time to time and become focal centres of organising their readers into compact bodies. There should be one central organisation in each colony to which all Indians should belong.

The problem of organisation is however not solely

racial. Overseas Indians are but one community among many other communities with whom they live in the closest proximity. Together with the dominant imperialist races, particularly the British, African, Asiatic and other oppressed races live in the colonies. Indians cannot therefore live an isolated racial existence. They have to combine with the other races to advance culture and prosperity in their own colonies and further the fight for freedom and democracy throughout the world. Such a united front of races must be given an organisational shape. There is for instance the Trade Union of the working class which is easily a united front of all labourers to whatever race they might belong with a view to greater justice and freedom. In like manner, associations of small peasants and small traders irrespective of racial origins may become the united front of all such as wish to resist imperialist exploitation.

The Englishman is everywhere supreme. According to the British High Commissioner in Malaya, the Englishman owns each colony in equal rights with "natives of the soil". In reality, it is the imperialist who is the sole master. Overseas Indians are often counselled to patience and co-operation with the imperialist master. At a farewell dinner to the Indian Agent in South Africa in January 1938, a member of the South African Cabinet advised South African Indians to co-operate with the European. He was concerned to find that of late there had been some attempts in South Africa to form a non-European united front in which Indians were taking a leading part. This may be a matter of concern to the South African European; it is happy news for all such as desire international brotherhood based on equality of races. In so far as a united front of Indian and other oppressed races, eminently the African, is designed to combat European supremacy and resist imperialist exploitation, it is both necessary and desirable. Neither Indians nor Africans can singly resist their conditions of political and economic inferiority and of cultural

backwardness. They must make common cause with each other. Such a united front however is not necessarily a purely racial combination. Europeans, who are themselves exploited or who cannot tolerate the denial of humanity that is a daily practice in the colonies, are welcome to a united front of all races to end slavery. Its new economic policies are a further consolidation of colonial imperialism. The railway may be an improvement upon the boat and the mechanised large plantations upon the backward small plots. But, so long as the motive force of all such improvement is the consolidation of imperialist profits and control, it will inevitably lead to further misery and backwardness. To resist this further deterioration, Overseas Indians should devote themselves especially to achieving a united front of all oppressed races and the exploited masses.

India has often concerned herself with the problems of her overseas children. Mahatma Gandhi started his first Civil Disobedience Movement in South Africa. Ever since, the Indian National Congress has time and again taken up a resolute stand in regard to the political and economic disabilities of Overseas Indians. Aside from general publicity, she has also tried to defend their position through resort to direct action, as, in the instance of boycott of Zanzibar cloves. India can further cement her bonds with her overseas communities. Exchange visits of cultural contacts may be arranged as also teachers may go out from India to spread education amongst the children of Overseas Indians.

Overseas Indians can also make India better known to the world, alike in the colonies as also in free countries. They can act as the unofficial embassies of the Indian National Congress. Throughout the world they can help in creating a front of freedom and democracy. Already in the cities of the United States, in London, in China and Japan and in other world cities, there are considerable numbers of Indians who are helping to

bring India into closer contacts with the progressive world. Such work should be intensified.

Indians are not, as is usually supposed, a stay-at-home and tied-to-the-soil people. For every hundred that stay in the motherland, one Indian seeks his living overseas. These 3 million of our stock, who are spread all over the world, are our special concern and our link with the world. We must share their sufferings and joys in common. And while we do so, we may not forget that, through concentration of population and trade, they are the predominant community in several British colonies. With each advance in their unity and organisation, a blow is struck for Indian freedom and against imperialism.

GENERAL

Out of nearly 30 lakhs of our countrymen living abroad, Ceylon, Malaya, South Africa, Mauritius, Trinidad and Fiji account for nearly 80%. The position of Indians in these countries leaves very much to be desired and appears, in certain cases, to be deteriorating.

The 85,000 Indians in Fiji who account for only a little less than half of the entire population of the island are worried mainly over questions of land tenure, domicile, education and franchise. Twenty thousand of these are of school-going age but only 5,000 are actually in school. They have been deprived of their municipal franchise and, with the recent introduction of the principle of nomination to the legislature, they fear that the possibility of any future improvement is very seriously jeopardised. Even such Indians as are domiciled and permanently settled in Fiji must, it appears, secure a landing permit from the Secretary for Indian affairs on their return from India. The Secretary for Indian affairs is a salaried official of the Fiji Government and seems, together with the Governor of the island, to regard with fear the fact that Indians might profit by the recent

discoveries of gold in that island.

Indians do not own land in Fiji. They are tenants either of Fijian owners or of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. Under a Crown proclamation, all land should belong to the Fijians. Exception has, nevertheless, been made in favour of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to whom extensive freeholds have been granted. Indians can lease land either of the Fijian owners on a twenty-one year contract or of the Company on a ten year contract. It is clear that such tenancies are always very insecure and generally reduce the tenant to a position of intolerable poverty and indebtedness. Moreover, most leases acquired by Indians date from the period 1917-1920, when the indenture was abolished. In the next few years, these leases will expire and Fijian Indians will be faced with a serious crisis. It is suggested that there is so much unoccupied land in the island that the needs of both Indian Fijians and Fijians can be met.

Ceylon accounts for over 8 lakhs of Indians. In recent years, there has developed an agitation demanding their repatriation and the restriction of immigration. In fact, a resolution on these lines was tabled in the State Council. As Ceylon wants preferential treatment to her export trade of copra with India, this agitation has not gained ground.

18,000 Indians reside in the island of Jamaica. The legality of marriages according to Indian rules is not admitted. This disability appears to be a minor one, unless it is viewed in the proper context of domicile and rights of island-born citizenship.

Indians in New Zealand are deprived of old age pension and workmen's compensation. Workmen's compensation is granted only to nationals of countries with reciprocity.

Indians are spread all over the world and enjoy a very important position, numerically and sometimes economically, in some of the nerve-centres of the

British Empire. Their political position, however, is a source of constant anxiety to them and their economic interests are threatened by European encroachment. They are above all anxious to maintain their ties with India.

ZANZIBAR

The Indian has become the convenient scapegoat of the British in Africa. If the African and Arab planter or trader suffers dwindling of his profits due to causes of world depression or imperialist acquisition, it is ultimately the Indian who is held responsible. Lest the Africans and Arabs should know the real makers of their misfortune, investigating Commissions do their little bit towards strengthening British rule by equating the Indian with all the evil deeds of trade-profiteering and money-lending and blood-sucking. In Zanzibar and in various South African legislatures, laws are being enacted whose basis is the assumed guilt of the Indian for the country's poverty.

While these laws thus serve the purpose of retarding Africa's political education and distracting her from the anti-imperialist movement to petty inter-communal and anti-Indian rivalries, they are also designed to enrich further the British imperialist. In this manner, through the anti-Indian laws, the colonial office of the British Government serves the threefold purpose of perpetuating the political rule of the British over the colonies, of enriching the British monopolist at the expense of the Indian small trader and of running colonial administrations with the Indian's property.

The Clove Decree of the Zanzibar Government is just such a law. Under this law, the purchase of cloves from growers in distant areas becomes a monopoly of the Clove Growers Association. Despite its name, the Association is not formed of the growers of clove but consists of an advisory body of six or more persons

appointed by the Government. The Indian trader will have been completely ousted. He is today the seller-supplier of manufactures and other commodities to the African and Arab growers and buyer-collector of cloves from them. He is also an exporter and creditor.

Together with the land alienation and debt decrees, the clove monopoly is justified on the ground that the Arabs and Africans are being crushed under heavy debts, that their lands have passed under Indian control and that the Indian traders' speculation causes great instability of prices. As an answer to these charges, it has been shown that agricultural indebtedness in Zanzibar does not exceed 20% of the assets and that even to this day Indians do not own more than between $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ and $17\frac{1}{4}\%$ of the total number of clove trees of the land. The Zanzibar clove trees are estimated between thirty and forty lakhs. As for the charge of speculation, it is pointed out that the years when the price of clove reached a low level and later rose were also those of great fall of agricultural prices all over the world and of their later recovery.

It is true that the clove growers need assistance of various description. They need to be given proper credit facilities and improved seeds and should be told about the exact requirements of overseas markets. Free storage is desirable. But for all this a monopoly of the clove trade is not at all needed or desirable.

The Indian speculator is likely to have augmented certain unwelcome tendencies of the clove market but the harm that the monopoly will do is very much in excess and is already showing itself. A representation of the Indian Association of Zanzibar reads :

"The evil effects of monopoly and the resultant harm to the growers are by now quite patent in the case of clove-stems. Since the 1st of January 1936, export of stems from Zanzibar has been prohibited in favour of the Zanzibar distillery and the growers have been obliged to sell them locally to the Clove Growers

Association or the distillery at about Re. 1 to 1½ per frasila of 35 lbs. This Association is in a position to say that there is a definite demand of stems at Rs. 3 to 3½ per frasila in foreign markets if it were allowed to be exported."

The Zanzibar distillery was a British concern and is now reported to have been taken over by the Zanzibar Government. In any case, no further evidence of how these laws are designed to enrich either the British monopolist or the colonial government at the expense of African and Arab farmer and Indian trader will be found necessary.

The existence of 15,000 Indians who form nearly 6% of the population of Zanzibar is in danger. The Arabs, Swahilies and other African tribes do not stand to gain by these laws. In the course of a letter the Indian National Association of Zanzibar writes: "The Indian community, far from being a burden, have been of great help to Arabs and Africans and have stood through thick and thin with them." It is to be hoped that the anti-imperialist tie among these will not be allowed to loosen whatever the cost.

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The Zanzibar Clove Bill came into operation on 1st August, 1937. As a measure of retaliation, Indian dealers and exporters of clove decided in a conference held on 10th July to resort to passive resistance. No Indian is to apply for buying licenses as an agent of the Clove Growers Association. No Indian is to engage in the export trade. No Indian is to serve on the advisory board of the Clove Growers Association. It is not difficult to see that this virtually means a hunger-strike of the 15,000 Indians now residing in Zanzibar. They are looking at India with expectation and hope in their eyes. They want the Indian people and merchants to declare a voluntary boycott on Zanzibar cloves. India imports 40% of the entire Zanzibar export of cloves

and there is ground that such a step will bring reason to the Zanzibar Government. The Government of India should now impose an embargo ; that is an insistent demand. In their determination to resist the Clove Act, the Zanzibar Indians have appealed to the Provincial Governments and Municipalities to assist in the embargo on cloves. What the Clove Law will mean to Indian traders is apparent from the latest activities of the Clove Growers Association. This monopolist association is carrying out auction sales of plantation crops under its own authority and arranging to purchase India's gunny bags through European firms in Zanzibar.

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While the British Resident in Zanzibar was declaring that the clove monopoly was the arch of the whole settlement, he was also recommending to the Zanzibar council to approve expenditure of over Rs. 30,000 as Zanzibar's contribution to Government of Kenya for coastal defence. Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar are henceforth to maintain in common a Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Unit and a Coastal Defence Unit at Mombasa. Zanzibar is to contribute 14% towards the total capital and recurrent expenditure to be incurred for the general East African Defence Scheme. The establishment of a naval unit to safeguard the East African coast for the British Empire and the deliberate ousting of Indians from the clove trade of Zanzibar appear to be parts of the same scheme.

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Information has reached from Zanzibar that the daily business loss of the Indian community there is anything between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 15,000. The strike has now lasted for nearly four months and at the most moderate estimate the Indian community of Zanzibar has suffered a loss of Rs. 10 lakhs. The only hope of Indians in Zanzibar is the effectiveness of our

own boycott of Zanzibar cloves. We learn authoritatively that this boycott has already told upon the commercial life of Zanzibar. Some Arab and African cultivators of cloves are regarding the Indian strike with sympathy. Despite a bumper crop of cloves this year the Zanzibar clove monopoly is manoeuvring for a very small harvest. The motive obviously is that with little or no export of cloves to India a good crop might depress prices. This has naturally resulted in considerable resentment among the African and the Arab clove growers. If we can make our boycott of Zanzibar cloves still more effective there is no reason why the combined strength of the African and Arab clove growers and the Indian traders should not bend the Zanzibar Government to an early settlement with the Indians of Zanzibar.

The action of the Indian National Congress in organising a boycott of Zanzibar cloves has brought our countrymen overseas cheer and hope. It is perhaps for the first time that India has resorted to action in succour of her overseas children. This will give them faith and courage and hope. The Zanzibar Indians have numerous odds to contend against and an uphill fight. Despite their peaceful struggle, some racial antagonism has been aroused and the Zanzibar Government is accused of encouraging it. Although Zanzibar officers are instructed to "avoid any action likely to give rise to interracial friction" the Government admits, "when opinion is divided on racial lines it is impossible for Government to prevent statements being made, even by its own officers, which especially if misunderstood, misinterpreted, misquoted or misrepresented as is occasionally inevitable, may not give offence or arouse resentment between races."

TANGANYIKA AND MAURITIUS

Even while the brave resistance of Zanzibar Indians

against the British clove monopoly is still continuing, Tanganyika Indians are faced with a similar but more drastic measure. The Tanganyika Government has proposed "An Ordinance to make provision for the encouragement and control of Native Agriculture and Industry and the marketing of the products thereof." Any product of agriculture, horticulture or animal husbandry may be declared a regulated product and the Government will then set up a Native Produce Board to control its production and marketing. The Board may give directions as to the method of production, grading and packing and these shall be binding on all producers. The Board may also assume a sole monopoly of purchase. It is obvious that the scope of this proposed measure extends over the entire economic life of Tanganyika. Producers may be effectively controlled and traders completely wiped out of existence. There are over 20,000 Indians in Tanganyika and almost the entire trade of the country is in their hands. Among these are merchants, storekeepers, government servants, photographers, typists, electricians, metalworkers and a host of other professions. With the passage of this Ordinance, their existence will be endangered. Some will have to slave under the Board and yet others lose their living and their place taken up by British clerks. Indian opposition to this measure is very stiff and the Tanganyika African Welfare Association has also declared its opposition.

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Nearer home, in an island of the Indian Ocean, the Indians of Mauritius are in a frightful plight. Even though they form nearly seventy per cent of the entire population, over $2\frac{3}{4}$ lacs in a total of 4 lacs, Mauritian Indians are either labourers in the French-owned sugar factories or work on the sugar plantations. They are illiterate, ignorant and disunited. They have taken with them from here the barriers of language and province. A solitary Indian has come into the ownership

of three sugar factories and some are moderately rich planters but they do not seem to be very much concerned with the course of their collective destiny. And so the sugar factory owners are left in the enjoyment of their super profits without any resistance.

The worker in the Mauritian factories is ill-paid and overworked ; his monthly wage fluctuates between Rs. 20 and Rs. 25. The small planter, who has no other market save that of the factory, is under the virtual serfdom of the Factory-owners Syndicate. Sometimes the millowners refuse to crush his cane and, when they do crush, they frequently exchange 1 ton of sugarcane for 60 to 70 kgs. of sugar, in other words, less than half of the sugar actually extracted. It is believed that there is a systematic drive to seize his lands for non-payment of even the smallest debts and so to form large-scale plantations. In both cases the sufferers are the Indians of Mauritius.

In August 1937, Mauritius saw the unique spectacle of workers' and peasants' strikes. The cry of "Jaya Bharata"—Victory to India—was often heard on their lips. The workers demand increase in wages, right to form trade unions and sanitary working conditions. The peasants demand legal machinery to enforce proper weighments of sugarcane, its compulsory crushing and a fixed rate of payment. These strikes are reported to have resulted in eight deaths and hundreds of arrests. It is unfortunate that some of these deaths should have taken place at the hands of the Indian factory owner, who seems to have been angered out of his wits at the spectacle of a strike.

The agitation carried on by the Mauritian Labour Party which admits Indians and Creoles alike to its membership has also revealed the intensely reactionary character of the Mauritian Constitution. Under the present laws less than 3% of the population is admitted to the franchise, which secures the return to the Council of millowning interests.

The Constitution of Mauritius, as behoves a British crown colony, is anti-democratic. The Governor, supported by a wholly nominated Executive Council, rules the Island. The Council of Government, the Island's legislature, consists of 27 members, of whom 17 constitute the nominated official and non-official bloc. The 10 popular members are elected on the basis of the narrow and undemocratic franchise of 9,459 for the whole Island. In addition, the Governor is empowered to enact legislation "considered by him to be essential in interest of good government."

While the Mauritian Constitution is thus an appendage to the authority of the Governor, the citizen's liberties are still more meagre. The Penal Code illegalises strikes and does not permit associations of more than 15 persons without the consent of the Government. Though a Trade Union Bill was published in the Government Gazette in 1926, it has not yet been discussed in the Council and Mauritian workers have no trade unions. As the crop season was nearing in July 1937 and unrest among small planters and labourers, which eventually led to strikes, was evident, the Government banned all political meetings. A direct result of the absence of the liberties of meeting and association is that, contrary to the communication of the British Government to the International Labour Organisation, the laws on night work, minimum wage and non-employment of children are not applied.

Mauritian Indians have to wage the twofold struggle for democracy and for economic betterment. In fact, the fight for more prosperous conditions and for increased share in the government of the colony are two facets of the same task. Indians, not only in Mauritius but in all British colonies, are faced with this task. In this connexion, a communication of the Creole President of the Mauritius Labour Party to the Congress Foreign Department deserves attention: "Most British colonies have a large Indian population forming the

labouring classes. It appertains to India who is represented at the International Labour Office of Geneva to take in hand the cause of all the colonies of whatever nationality and to suggest that they should be represented at Geneva. India is the only power represented at Geneva which can stand for the coloured races and see that those races receive their share of the social reforms which are being adopted elsewhere. It is India's duty to be the champion of the colonies where so many of her sons live and toil."

Information comes from Ceylon of the desire of the Ceylonese Government to oust Indian cultivators from their lands. In Kandapola, 37 Indian families have been cultivating vegetables for now over 36 years. They have cleared grassy lands, made them fertile and erected dwellings and cattlesheds. There is yet waste land and still the Sinhalese Minister of Agriculture will have the Indians ousted from their living. In like manner, the proposed Village Ordinance seeks to exclude the 700,000 Indian estate labourers from any share in the local self-government of the country.

So, in the east of the African Continent and in the two islands of the Indian Ocean, the economic and political position of Indians is simultaneously attacked. What does this indicate? Who is to blame? Is it that the Indian is in reality exploiting the African and the Sinhalese and the Mauritian or that he is a distasteful interference to the British in their own pleasant job? The maintenance of high colonial salaries and increased expenditure on defence and a few more jobs to the British middle class are a first charge on the British colonial office. Monopolies of native produce are formed and attack on Indian traders follows. Imperialism however does not rest there. It must poison the world with enmity and ill-will. It chokes and throttles the economic life of a colony and leaves no scope for expansion nor elbow-room. The stage is set for a Sinhalese Minister, for instance, to follow the line of

least resistance and launch a futile attack on fellow-sufferers. It is also likely that the British colonial office wishes to oust Indians from their present positions in the Empire lest they should become troublesome under Free India.

Kenya and British East Africa:—Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika comprise a territory of round 17 lacs sq. kilometres and are, thus, over one-third the size of India. Both as source of raw materials and fields of capital investments, they can be made very productive for the Empire. Tanganyika is only nominally a mandated territory ; for all practical purposes it is a part of British East Africa. A union of customs and posts and telegraphs has already been achieved. The postal stamps from any part of British East Africa flaunt a lion surrounded by the names of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika printed in English letters. Coins bear the effigies of the British King.

Aside from the obvious military strategic uses, this close political union of British East Africa is essentially a reflection of the Empire's economic aspirations. British East Africa must now change over from a field of extensive to intensive imperialist exploitation. This change-over has necessitated a common anti-Indian policy in economic organisation.

Kenya and Tanganyika have recently formulated a law for regulation of transport. Under this law, monopoly can be granted to such transport as merits the attention of a paid Board of the Government. Not only motor and bus but also boat transport may be entirely wiped out with an administrative order. This drastic law of the Kenya Government contravenes the report of its own expert appointed in 1936 to enquire into problems of transport. "From its nature there seems very little chance of the Kenya and Uganda railways capturing any large portion of the extensive traffic in local produce which is now being usefully carried by dhows (boats). The Licensing Commission would

not therefore find it necessary or desirable to introduce any restriction in the present number or operations of dhows." That the Government should have set aside this recommendation of its own expert and all other considerations of advantage to the African is clearly expressive of its inordinate desire to capitalise the country through railways and other business investments. Indians are the direct victims and Africans will suffer indirectly.

The Kenya Highlands controversy is now closed and extensive and fertile lands in the country will now be reserved for exclusively European use through an Order-in-Council. Thirty-five years ago, in 1902, the Kenya Government had assured the Indian community that they were "in error in supposing that the Government has any intention of drawing any distinction between Europeans and Indians so far as rights of mining, settling and acquiring lands are concerned." Assurances and promises however cannot hold water against inexorable economic necessities. The Empire today needs large plantations under exclusively European ownership so that its various demands of raw materials, profits on investments and military strategy may be satisfied. The chauvinist leader of the Kenya Defence Force to which no Indian is admitted has already ranted that Kenya Highlands are European and that no interference either by Kenya Indians or by the Government of India will be tolerated.

SOUTH AFRICA

The census figures for May 1936 put the total number of Indians in South Africa at 2,19,928. Nearly 80 per cent of these live in the province of Natal. The European settlers of Natal are certainly no votaries of the principle of racial harmony. As far back as 1894, they had proposed a law depriving Indians of the parliamentary franchise and, after a minor set-back they finally put through the Disfranchisement Act, 1898. In the

interval, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the then Colonial Secretary, had preached a sermon about "the tradition of the Empire which makes no distinction in favour of or against race or colour". Finally in 1925, Indians were further deprived of their municipal franchise. The stories of other public and social indignities, reserved tram-cars, derogatory epithets and of economic disabilities are only too well known.

The province of Transvaal has a still more revealing history. By the Law of 1885 Indians were debarred from ownership of land in proclaimed areas, which means, in good and fertile areas; the Gold Law of 1908 deprived them of the right of residence in these areas; by the Asiatic Amendment Act of 1919, they could start no new business and, finally, the Transvaal Asiatic Land Renure Act of 1932, the crowning piece of the edifice, has withheld from them both the right of residence and trade except in their own Bazaars.

The Union Government is steadily pursuing a civilised labour policy which is also known as the White Labour Policy. Under the operation of this policy, Indians are systematically ousted from employment in the industries of South Africa. The total number of Asiatics employed in industry in the Union was 12,308 in 1917-18; it fell down to 10,215 in 1934-35. This shows that the White Labour Policy of the Government is responsible for driving out of employment nearly 20 per cent of the Asiatics, almost entirely Indians, formerly employed in industry. In the railways of the Union, the twelve years from July 1925 to July 1937 are responsible for the decline of Asiatic employees from 1936 to 506. The 17 years from 1920 to 1937 have brought an alarming decline in the number of Indians employed in the mining industry from 3139 to 790. As against 790 Indians employed in the mining industry today, 44,902 Europeans are employed. The staggering decline in the number of Indians employed in the industries of South Africa during the last two

decades is still more alarming, when we consider that during the same period the Indian population has increased by about 35 per cent.

The Wage Bill of the South African industry shows the enormous disparity between the earnings of the European as compared to those of the Asiatic and the African. Europeans form 44 per cent of the total number and earn £ 18,800,000, Africans form 42 per cent and earn £ 4,600,000 and Indians form 4 per cent and earn £ 557,000. The European thus earns three times as much as the Indian or four times as much as the African.

South Africa has a peculiar taste for anti-Indian laws. The South African Parliaments are always discussing one law or the other designed either to inflict further disabilities on Indians or to hurt their national pride. Two such recent projects related to the employment of European women or their marriage with Indians. "Gentlemen, you must realise that you Indians in South Africa will ever be a tragic community because of the temper and temperament of the people of South Africa. They have the temper and that temperament because we are determined to keep this a White Man's country," is the statement made by a South African Minister for Agriculture.

India had the pleasure to receive a South African Goodwill Delegation in the summer of 1936. Some members of the Delegation showed a fair amount of sympathy with Indian claims and one even went to the extent of associating himself with India's fight for Swaraja. Nevertheless, South Africa is run by such Whites as are incapable of broad visions. South Africa however has lately shown a nervous anxiety. She is afraid of Italian aggression and German plans. Till three years ago, the South African Defence Minister, who is also an aggressive anti-Indian, did not even listen to projects of joint Imperial defence and is only too eager to have it now. South Africans stand in need of goodwill and they may also be prepared to pay for it heavily.

It is also interesting to observe certain newer trends among the Indian colonists. The Colonial Born and Settlers Association of Transvaal founded in July 1933 appears to be aggressively dissatisfied with the South African Government's schemes of assisted repatriation of Indians back to India or any where else. And assisted repatriation seems to have been the basic item in the Cape Town Agreement, 1927. In rejecting the Cape Town Agreement, the Association also rejects the specious theory that Indians are foreigners in South Africa. Indians alike as any other race have a right to regard South Africa as their home and contribute to its prosperity. They might continue to retain their cultural bonds with India, but they are essentially South Africans. The Association's work for inter-racial co-operation and understanding in South Africa appears to be directed towards near relations between Negroes and Indians.

MALAYA

Indians in Malaya have received the Sastri Report with mixed feelings. They are unable to agree with some recommendations in the Report and feel that a few of their problems have not been touched at all. In regard to wages which were fixed at 45 cents (1 cent = 1 pice) for men and 36 cents for women, the Report has recommended to the Government of India to press for the introduction of the standard rates of 1928, namely, 50 cents per day for men and 40 cents for women. This recommendation falls short of the demand for "adequate wages" made by the Indian Associations of Malaya to the Indian Deputation. Recently, the Chinese labourers of the Ulu Langat district plantations had gone on strike and, in March 1937, their demands were partially accepted. The wage rates were decided upon at 75 cents for tappers and 55 cents for male and 50 cents for female unskilled labour. This incident, according to

our correspondent, shows "what the Chinese Estate Labourers have achieved without any delegation but by direct action." It is thought that, unless the wages of Indian Labour were standardised at a rate similar to the Chinese, they would remain inadequate and the Indian labourer would continue in his present state of poverty and degradation. The Report says that the working day is nominally 9 hours, which in practice is reduced to 8 hours, but it is felt that a straight and clear recommendation of an 8 hour working day was called for.

This takes us to the problem of assisted emigration. Even today, Indians form a little over 12% of the entire population of Malaya, over 5 lakhs out of 44 lakhs. During the two years 1931 and 1932, over a lakh of our countrymen immigrated back into India. Those were years of slump in the rubber industry and the planters were lying back upon the enormous profits they had gorged in the preceding years. Wages were reduced and men were thrown out of employment and they had no facilities for settling down in Malaya. On account of these reasons and the fact that Indians have no political status in Malaya, the Indian Associations of Malaya have ranged themselves against assisted emigration.

There are serious grievances in regard to travel and quarantine. As it is today, the Indian labourer is made to embark at Negapatam, where the sea is rough and dangerous, while Madras would be much more convenient. All third class passengers are subjected to quarantine in Penang, and some of these are sent back to India on the ground that they suffer or are suspected to suffer from dangerous diseases. It is argued that such a medical examination ought to take place in India and the unfits should not be made to suffer the inconvenience of a trying and futile travel.

The Sastri Report has expressed dissatisfaction at the educational facilities available to Indian labour

in Malaya. It is true that the Malayan Labour Code provides for a school in every such place of employment where the children between the ages of 7 and 14 are ten or more in number. But the real situation is entirely different. In spite of the fact that there is a very large element of Indian labour, mostly Tamilian, in Government departments and public bodies of Penang, Malacca and Singapore, there is not a single Government Tamil School in these places. If that is the control which the Malayan Labour Department exercises over Government bodies, the extent to which it enforces its regulations upon private employers can well be imagined.

Both in regard to public services and representation on public bodies, the status of Indians is of a decidedly inferior type. The Malayan Civil Service is now limited entirely to persons of British parentage and to Malaysians. Till some time back, Indians were allowed to enter the Malayan Civil Service. In this connexion, there is an entertaining statement of the High Commissioner to the effect that he knew of no country in which those who were not "natives of the soil or Englishmen" were appointed to such posts. Likewise, the representation of Indians on the Legislative Council of the Colony and the various State Councils of the Federated and Unfederated Malay States is very meagre.

Finally, the Indian Associations of Malaya have made a suggestion for the establishment of an Indian Commercial Museum either at Kuala Lumpur or Singapore. Trade between India and Malaya could be made to grow. As it is today, the high freights charged by steamship lines and the absence of any systematic exploration of trade possibilities, the trade between the two countries is very much below what it could be.

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The beginning was modest. In 1819, the East India Company established a trading station at Singapore. Today, British Malaya comprises a territory of

51,000 sq. miles with a population of 4.4 million. This colony is easily one of the richest in British possession. Of the world's total shipments of rubber nearly half goes out from Malaya; so, in 1935, out of a total of 887,000 tons 424,000 tons were exported from Malaya. Of the world's total production of tin ore over 30% is derived from Malaya; so, in 1935, this colony produced 41,000 tons out of a world total of 137,000. But Malaya is a colony and, while labour on the plantations and elsewhere is Malayan, Chinese and Indian, its profiteer is the British imperialist.

President Nehru's fortnight tour in Malaya in May 1937, proved a shake-up to the security of British imperialism as also the torpor of colonial labour as never before. The President was called names by the British controlled Malayan press. He became an 'agitator' 'tactless and ill-mannered' and was sometimes reminded of the wide reach of the law. "Times of Malaya" read into the President's exhortation to Indians to gather strength for India's independence an incitement to violence and queried: "strong enough for what, Pandit Nehru?" Regarding the President's insistence on independence as the goal of India's endeavour, "Singapur Free Press" expressed "doubt as to whether his trip is likely to prove beneficial either to him or to the community in general" and ended up with the rather ominous prophecy "we may shortly be called upon to defend the Indians of Malaya against one who is in some quarters almost worshipped as the supreme leader of the Indian race."

The President had occasion to refer to the charge of misuse of hospitality. What the British imperialist in Malaya perhaps expected of him was "drawing room manners." As to the Malayan himself, the President made the clear statement that the interests of the people of Malaya should receive consideration before those of the Indian emigrants. The imperialist however is nowhere an outsider!

When tens of thousands sat listening with eager

and expectant faces, what else could the President talk about but of economic liberation and Indian freedom.

A European journalist describes President Nehru's reception by Malaya: "Solegie Road at Singapur was transformed into a river of Indian nationalism. The crowd was intoxicated with excitement, pent up, emotional nearly to the pitch of hysteria." The Malayan and the Chinese were greatly enthused and they saw in President Nehru the symbol of the unity of anti-imperialist peoples of the world.

Aside from rubber and tin, Malaya furnishes the British Empire with one of its strongest naval bases, Singapur. The screeching of the British press is easily understood.

BRITISH GUIANA

Placed on the north-eastern top of the South-American sub-continent, Indians in British Guiana are just a little less than half of the entire population of the country. In May 1938, they will celebrate the centenary of the first advent of Indians into British Guiana. During these last hundred years, some of our countrymen have risen into fairly high business and professional positions. Mostly, they are labourers on the British-owned sugar estates. Despite an equal franchise and absence of racial discrimination, the voice of Indians in the political management of the country is negligent. Lack of education and of cohesive unity fritters away their numerical strength. Centenary celebrations of the Indian colony in British Guiana have therefore a unique importance. The celebrations will of course be an expression of joy and delight to which our compatriots ten thousand miles away are entitled after a hundred years' labour. But they will also be a call to organisation and determined unity and a desire to share in the political management of the country. As a sign-

post of the advance they have made in the past and of the growth which will be theirs in the future, Indians of British Guiana have decided to erect a centenary memorial. They are already running a paper and have formed an Association and the centenary building will give them room for further development. To their centenary celebrations, the Indian Association of British Guiana has invited the Indian National Congress to send a delegate.

British Guiana is one of those few Colonies whose statutes are not disfigured by racial discrimination against Indians. The franchise is equal, and if Indians stand at a disadvantage, it is due to their illiteracy. Aside, however, from this drawback of illiteracy for which the Government and our nationals might be held to be equally responsible, the economic conditions and laws of employment in British Guiana are such that they favour the strong against the weak, the white employer against the Indian labourer. Of the 136,000 Indians, who form over 40% of the entire population of the colony, over 53,000 are employed as labourers on the sugar estates. These are weak and disorganised and live in perpetual fear of unemployment. Ever since the cessation of indenture in 1917, when the Immigration Department also closed down, there is no official agency which may supervise and regulate the relations between the employer and labourer. And the labourers are too backward to form trade unions of their own. In this connexion, the findings of the Labour Disputes Commission released in December 1936, will be found to be of interest. The Report records that "during our investigations, no resident estate labourers came forward voluntarily to give evidence. We believe the cause of this to be the fear of retaliatory action and possible eviction from house and subsistence plot, with but 3 days' notice, as provided under the Employers' and Servants' Ordinance, and the knowledge that no alternative means of earning a livelihood is readily available." It is as-

tounding how a Statute such as this which enables employers to dismiss labourers and evict them from their houses and plots of land at 3 days' notice is permitted to continue in modern times. The British Guiana East Indian Association has long been demanding the appointment of a Resident Agent General from India to the British Guiana Government. The Agent, they think, would mediate between the plantation-owners and Labour to the advantage of the latter.

IMPERIALIST NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

British imperialism in the colonies is tending towards a new economic policy. Through the unrest in Uganda and Tanganyika, the strikes of labourers and petty peasants in Mauritius and the refusal of dealers to handle Zanzibar cloves run the threads of the new economic policy.

Pre-war imperialism was content to acquire an increasing volume of profits through extension of its territorial scope. There were large areas, particularly in the East African colonies, which were not yet opened out to imperialist trade. Cotton, for instance, was unknown to Uganda till 1903 when the Government imported a ton and half of cotton seeds. Large parts of the colony were inaccessible. At the close of the world-war, Uganda was already exporting over 47000 bales of cotton of lbs. 400 each. This was possible through the territorial extension of imperialist trade. New commodities of cultivation were introduced; there was an increase in the production of commercial crops at the expense of food crops. African and Arab producers of raw materials in East Africa and Zanzibar and Indian petty peasants in Mauritius now began to produce for the world market. For maintaining and extending this relationship between the producer of raw materials and the world market, mediation of widely distributed

traders was as necessary as the development of communications.

India fulfilled the Empire's need in traders and middle-men as much as she satisfied its demand for indentured labour in virgin areas. Indians in large numbers migrated to British colonies in Africa and all over the world. When adequate indigenous labour was not forthcoming, they served on the Empire's plantations and in factories. In any case, they were the Empire's middle-men in the colonies. The Indian would put up oil-men's stores in distant villages, where he would, at the same time, collect raw materials and sell manufactured articles. One may today see entire British colonies dotted over by thousands of Indian petty traders who carry on a both-ways trade with Africans, Arabs, Guineese, Malayan, Fijian, Ceylonese and other races.

So long, the Empire has stood in need of these traders. They have organised the Empire's network of trade. With their low standard of living and corresponding margin of profits, they alone could have done it.

The Empire can now no longer afford this economic structure which was adequate enough when there were yet mysteries in the world. Extensive agriculture and middlemen's profits could be permitted while imperialist capital could yet derive increasing profits out of newer areas. What it has lost in its inability to extend its embrace, imperialist capital must make up by further squeezing what it has in its grasp. This squeezing takes the initial form of squeezing out the middle-men and thus of appropriation of his profits. It also takes the form of rationalised and more intense exploitation of labour in the factories and plantations and involves the squeezing out of the small peasant.

The small peasant may be squeezed out in either of two ways. He may be dispossessed of his small plot either through sale or for non-payment of taxes and debts. He will then be transformed into a wage-earner

and the various small plots of land amalgamated into big plantations as in British Guiana. He may also continue to remain in nominal ownership of the land, but come under the inescapable control of price-regulating and money-lending monopolist concerns. The United Africa company operating in British West Africa is one such concern and has the West African peasant under its clutches.

In Zanzibar, the small trader is being squeezed out and, thus, the livelihood of over 10,000 Indians is affected. The Zanzibar Clove Monopoly wishes to appropriate their profits and distribute them over imperialist capital in a number of ways. The Monopoly is designed firstly to increase government revenues which are now called upon to contribute towards a new East African naval unit and generally to staff high-paid British officers. It is secondly so designed as to manipulate prices in favour of distilleries and other imperialist concerns. Finally, the monopoly which is today only a buying and selling concern may easily lead to the concentration of the thousands of African and Arab clove growers into a few big plantations controlled by imperialist capital. Against this monopoly the Indians of Zanzibar are carrying out a peaceful boycott now for over four months. Where Zanzibar Indians have refused to deal as paid officers of the Monopoly, India refuses to import Zanzibar cloves. Bumper crops are standing unharvested. The Zanzibar Government has already lost nearly £30,000 in revenues.

In Tanganyika, the Government is proposing a measure similar to the Zanzibar monopoly but more drastic in its scope. Under the Tanganyika Native Produce Bill, state monopoly may be declared in any commodity. The reason is again the desire to squeeze out the middleman. Unrest is already evident.

A silent fight has waged in Uganda during the last ten years between the small trader in cotton and the big ginning combines. A handful of ginnerers wish to elimi-

nate the small trader and effect concentration through buying combines. High prices for ginning cotton are charged of the small trader and the government is also placing difficulties in the way of the interior trading posts. This assault on the small trader's position is likely to grow and it may easily lead to the intensive exploitation and concentration of Uganda cotton-growing.

Ever since August 1937, there is a serious labour and peasant unrest in the little island of Mauritius. The Mauritian sugar factories have their adequate share of the world trade in sugar and yet they pay only Rs. 20 or sh. 30 a month to their labour. They are also mulcting the small planter both in the way of improper weighments and of low prices. Minor defaults in the payment of rent and debts lead to the auctioning of the estates of the small planters and it is believed that there is a systematic drive to effect concentration of sugarcane growing in a few big plantations. Both as labourers and as small planters, the victims are Indians. It is only to be regretted that there are, alike in Mauritius and Uganda, a few Indian sugar factory-owners and ginnerers who are assisting in this new imperialist policy of squeezing the small trader and the small peasant and the labourer.

This new economic policy of imperialism presents both racial and economic problems. In so far as the attack is at present directed almost entirely against the Indian communities in the British colonies, it is a racial problem. In so far as the motive of the attack is to rationalise and stabilise a crumbling imperialism, it is an economic problem.

Essentially, the Indian communities in the colonies must grasp the broad features of this world-wide imperialist and racial attack. They have to date known little organisation and their activities have been distinctly individualistic. Barriers of language and social status cause further dispersion. There is also the problem of a few very rich Indians in the colonies who cannot

dissociate themselves from imperialist policies. After an examination of all these factors, small peasants, small traders, free professions and labourers should all combine and act organisedly in defence of their racial and economic positions. The fight in Zanzibar has already started.

Secondly, the Indian communities must realize that the new imperialist policy is essentially an economic policy which involves other colonial peoples like Africans, Arabs, and Creoles. Only on the basis of a strong united front in action of all colonial peoples can imperialism be checkmated in rationalising itself. It appears that in Mauritius such a united front is slowly beginning to take shape and already a joint march of the Mauritian Indians and Creoles on the Island's capital has been carried out. Together with this united front of the colonial peoples, it is to be hoped that the labour movements of the imperialist countries will agitate against colonial oppression and the new imperialist drive.

Thirdly, India can effectively support this struggle of her overseas communities and other colonial peoples. Without her boycott of Zanzibar cloves, the Zanzibar strike would have been of little avail. She has to exercise similar vigilance in regard to unrest in other British colonies.

UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP

There has been considerable agitation both in this country and in the United States with regard to the eligibility of Indians for naturalisation as United States citizens. The Indian National Congress has often shown anxious concern over this problem. In the United States, Senator Copeland introduced in 1926 a bill to grant citizenship rights to Indians and considerable agitation, though unsuccessful, followed.

Under the provisions of the Naturalisation Act "aliens being free white persons" and "aliens of African

nativity and persons of African descent" are admitted to citizenship. Through correspondence exchanged between the United States Department of Labour, Immigration and Naturalisation Service and the Foreign Department of the Indian National Congress on complaints that arise from time to time, a variety of interesting facts is disclosed.

Indians could only be admitted under the provision of "aliens being free white persons." In the course of a judgment, the Supreme Court of the United States concluded that an Indian is not a "free white person." Its arguments are fourfold. Firstly the framers of the original law did not have in mind the brown or yellow races of Asia. Secondly, the racial category of "free white persons" should be applied to a group of living persons "now possessing in common the requisite characteristics" and not to such as may be "descended from some remote common ancestor." Thirdly, the Indian type, even if originally Aryan, has been "so changed by intermixture of blood as to justify an intermediate classification." Fourthly, the children of Indian parentage do not merge into the mass of American population and lose their distinctive hallmarks as those of English, French and other parentage do. The Supreme Court has added that it does not intend to suggest the slightest question of racial superiority or inferiority.

It is obvious that there are two strands of reasoning in this judgment. One is based on popular prejudices of colour and features. The other rests on the supposed necessity of the State of a uniform population. On the basis of these two prejudices, one popular and another scientific, over 15000 Indians in the United States are relegated to a secondary status.

In the interests of closer cooperation among the different peoples of the world for peace and progress, it is necessary that such laws are either revoked or their application modified. The Supreme Court was of the

opinion that all Asiatics are generally excluded from citizenship but has prudently added that the final determination could only come upon the consideration of particular cases as they arise from time to time. In this consideration of particular cases, two things are of deciding importance. Indian opinion must be so vigilant as to react unfavourably upon any attempt to reduce Indians to a secondary status in foreign countries. American opinion must be sufficiently progressive so as to appreciate the need for closer collaboration of the human races.

INDIAN CREW IN CHINA AND JAPAN

Indian crew of ships going to China and Japan are poorly and shabbily attired. Some shipping companies, it is reported, provide uniforms and clothings to poorly paid crew, but no Indian crew is supplied with such things. If the respective companies employing Indian crew are asked by the Government to see to it that they are properly dressed when the ships are in foreign ports and that they are supplied with a couple of suits at the expense of the companies, the present state of affairs would end.

INDIAN POLITICAL CONFERENCE IN LONDON

An Indian Political Conference was held in London in the month of July, 1936. Representatives of Indian and British organisations and individual delegates discussed the situation in India and the ways and means of furthering the campaign for India's independence in Britain.

The Conference adopted in all eight resolutions of which the "Political Resolution" is concerned directly with our movement for complete national independence. This resolution which is again split up into several parts

lays down that the agrarian problem is the fundamental problem of India today, that, as a result of merciless exploitation for 175 years under British rule, the poverty of the Indian peasant has reached its lowest level, his average income being 2d. per day per head, and that the kisan has not only to meet the extortionate demands of the British Raj but also the exorbitant rents and interests of the landlords and the money-lenders. A solution of this problem by reform or parliamentary legislation is impossible; it can be achieved only by the initiative of the oppressed and exploited masses themselves. The Conference, therefore, rejected the New Constitution which it styled an ingenious fraud designed to continue the reign of terror. To achieve success against this offensive of Imperialism, the Indian National Congress must mobilise the widest strata of the population into a decisive struggle against Imperialism and, accordingly, grant affiliation to Workers' and Peasants' Organisations. Such a Popular Front should have for its minimum the demands (1) Release of all political prisoners (2) Repeal of all repressive laws and restoration of civil liberties (3) Freedom of speech, press, association (4) Substantial reduction of land revenue, moratorium on peasants' debts and security of land tenure (5) Fixed minimum wage, 8-hour day and social insurance. The Conference re-affirmed the demand for complete independence of India outside the British Commonwealth of Nations and the immediate withdrawal of all armed forces from India. It called for a complementing of the slogan of rejection of the New Constitution by the positive slogan of the Constituent Assembly.

In another part of the resolution, namely, India and the Fight against War and Fascism, the Conference urged all workers and peace-lovers of Britain to realise that their struggle is identical with the liberation movement of the peoples of India and other colonies.

The Conference demanded removal of disabilities on Indian seamen in Britain who since the Shipping

Subsidy Act of 1935 are refused employment in British ships as also effective measures against the present state of humiliation and distress of Indians abroad. The Conference demanded the abolition of the Education Department of the High Commissioner and the dismissal of advisers to Indian students at British Universities, as they were engaged in anti-Indian activities and espionage on students. The Conference protested against suppression of civil liberties in India. It condemned the Fascist conquest of Abyssinia and Japanese aggression in China and wished the dastardly and infamous betrayal of Abyssinia by the League Powers to be known to the world. The Conference, in welcoming the Foreign Department of the Indian National Congress, stated that the real scope of work lay in the ranks of the discontented elements of the labour and socialist movements in foreign countries.